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Stereotypes in Media: The Dangers they Pose to Young Women Today

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Stereotypes in Media

The Dangers they Pose to Young Women Today



By: Lauren Koehl, Emily Langston, Madison Sternberg, and Sierra Ward



Black and White Image of Girl Holding a Picture of a Barbie Face Over Her Face courtesy of Safety First For Girls. https://millardwestcatalyst.com/staff_name/photo-courtesy-of-safety-first-for-girls/

It is extremely common for children to internalize gender role stereotypes that they view in media such books, songs, movies, and most commonly television.

Body Image Portrayal in Media



Image of Sophia Bush in a One Tree Hill Episode with a Projector of Stereotypes Reflected Across Her Body. <https://identity-mag.com/stop-labeling-women-according-to-their-status/>



Cartoon Image of a 1950s Housewife Holding a Tray of Food. Image Courtesy of PublicDomainPictures. <https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/en/view-image.php?image=162717&picture=retro-fifties-lady-art-collage>

Women are now being sexualized and given the stereotypical beauty and nurturing characteristics.

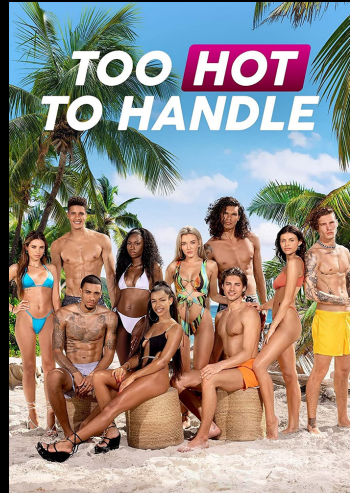


Stereotypes highlight: beauty, thinness, physical appearance, and sexual appeal as being central to women's values. Girls focus more on their appearance, are more often judged on their appearance, and more likely to be sexualized when it comes to television shows

Body Image Media Example

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

The Netflix show "Too Hot to Handle" consists of a group of determined singles who visit paradise to meet, mingle, and remain celibate for their chance to win \$100,000. The show often consists of both male and female contestants with the "ideal" body type, they're all very fit, skinny, and petite sizes.



Too Hot To Handle 2020 Season Cover Photo. Photo courtesy of IMDb.

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12004280/mediaviewer/rm2852970497?ref_=tt_ov_i

THE DUFF

"The Duff" is a movie about a teenage girl who realizes that her classmates have been calling her the "DUFF", designated ugly fat friend. Throughout the movie, she gets help from the stereotypical jock who helps her reinvent herself and her look. Although the movie rejects social norms, Mae Whitman, who plays the DUFF, wouldn't even be considered of an overweight size. This movie continues to show the negative body image that the media portrays.



The DUFF Movie Cover Photo. Photo courtesy of IMDb.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1666801/>

The Male Gaze

The male gaze is the idea that women are portrayed in the media to appeal to heterosexual men and the western world's ideal view of a woman.

Effects of the Male Gaze:

- negative self-view
- depression
- lack of confidence
- professional and career troubles

This portrayal of women often oversexualizes them and reinforces society's stereotypes of beauty...



Black and White Image of Calvin Klein Model Wearing Lingerie and Heels
by Daniel, <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?>

<https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSYtxllb5ZmbrDpypK7hHt4wdi08rx6gQO7vA&usqp=CAU>
U. Used under fair use.



Wonder Woman Portrayed With Seductive Makeup and Costume by
Kwame Opam.

<https://www.theverge.com/2016/7/13/12161310/wonder-woman-de-comics-story-script-women-writers>. Used under fair use.

Oversexualization Examples in Advertising

Dior



Advertisement for Dior's Miss Dior perfume. Photo from Luxury Daily.
<https://www.luxurydaily.com/dior-takes-a-step-towards-film-with-latest-perfume-ad/>

Perfume companies often use sexual images or videos to sell their products to consumers.

As pictured, Dior used a woman scantily covered in fabric. It suggests to women and girls that they only have worth as sexualized objects with the "ideal" body type.

BMW

This advertisement is for used BMW cars. However, there are no cars pictured in the ad and the slogan "You know you're not the first" along with the picture has sexual implications. The ad shows women as objects to have and teaches youth that it is okay to talk about women this way.

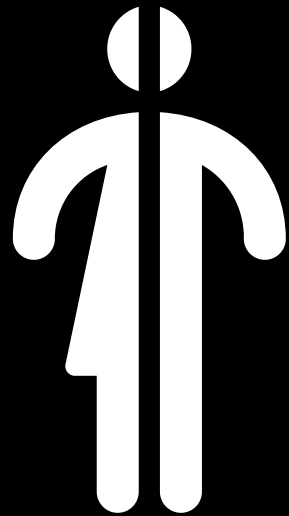


Ad for BMW used cars. Photo from Business Insider.
<https://www.businessinsider.com/sleaziest-car-ads-of-the-21st-century-2013-3>

Media's Influence on Children

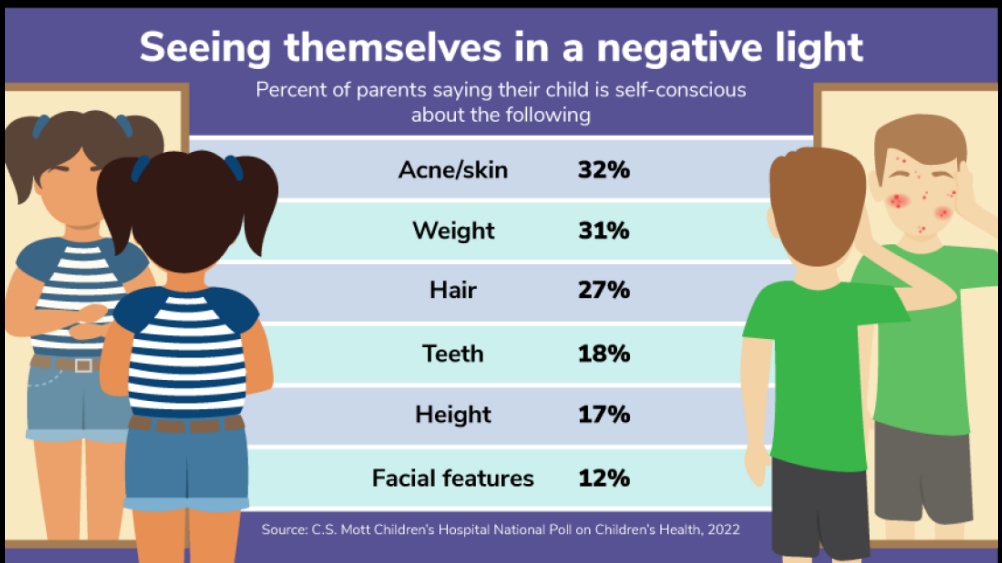
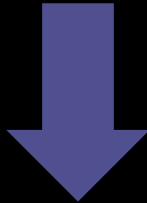
It is very common for children to **internalize** gender role stereotypes that they view in media such books, songs, movies, and most commonly, television.

Females in roles of power are underrepresented within the media. This creates a lack of positive female role models for young girls, and consequently allows them to develop ideas of gender biases and stereotypes.



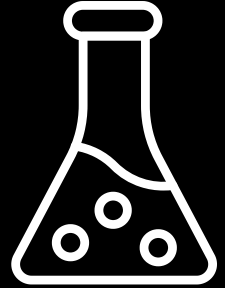
Effects of Media on Children:

- Higher obesity rates
- More likely to enter into abusive relationships
- More likely to develop an eating disorder
- Depression
- Lower work ethic/ambition for future career
- Low self esteem and negative self view



Effects on Women's Careers

The stereotypes that young girls see in the media today lead them to have **less interest** in the area of STEM and often causes them to feel out of place in these areas of study.



Girls who witness the misrepresentation of women in STEM through media production perform poorly in math and science classes.

Women make up nearly half the workforce, but only 27% of STEM careers.



#DressForSTEM

Graphic of the Statistics of the Amount of Women that Make up the STEM workforce. Image courtesy of KCRG News.

<https://www.kcrg.com/content/news/STEM-professionals-wear-purple-for-Dress-for-STEM-Day-568788711.html>

Television and movies often put male characters in careers involving math and science, and place female characters in more domestic roles.

Effects on Women's Home Lives



In most forms of media, women are homemakers and men are portrayed as being incapable of housework like cooking and cleaning. This leads to the expectation that women will do this work even if they also work outside the home.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, women aged 15-24 spend 54% more time on housework than men the same age.



Men in media are shown as saviors to women's incompetence, which can lead to men believing these stereotypes. This belief leads to a power dynamic in many shared homes or relationships because women are expected to be passive.

What Can Be Done?



Social Media

- Educate young people about social media
- Take breaks from it
- Be reminded that what people post isn't always real
- Talk to people in person and connect with them
- Try to avoid comparisons

Movies and TV

- Support women in media, such as female directors or screenwriters
- Don't consume content that objectifies or stereotypes women
- Educate people about stereotypes in media and teach them to ignore them



Image depicting stereotypical women's interests and traits in pink and men's in blue. Photo courtesy of Issuesonline. <https://www.issuesonline.co.uk/articles/gender-stereotyping>

Sources:

All images not credited are courtesy of Canva.

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Thank You

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